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MAR LODGE ESTATE MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES 2006

The management of the Mar Lodge Estate (MLE) will be based on delivering the core purposes of The National Trust for Scotland (NTS), as defined in its Order Confirmation Acts of 1935 and 1938, and on the NTS' Strategic Policies.

The Principal aim of the NTS shall be to manage the Estate in a sustainable manner for the benefit of the nation, ensuring the continuing conservation and restoration of its internationally important geology, flora, fauna, wild land quality and archaeological value;

Subject always to its management of the Estate in accordance with the principal aim and subject at all times to compliance with the Land Reform Act 2003 and the Scottish Outdoor Access Code:

- (i) The NTS shall ensure appropriate public access to the Estate, subject always to the maintenance of the landscape and nature conservation interests. The Trust shall promote best practice in the implementation of the SOAC;
- (ii) The NTS shall manage the Estate so as to conserve its valuable ecological and landscape features in harmony with its maintenance as a Highland Sporting Estate for so long as field sports remain legal. Such management will be carried out in a manner which will, so far as possible, enhance the social, cultural and economic well-being of the local community. Such aspiration to enhance the social and economic well-being of the local community extends collectively to all of the management and interests of the Mar Lodge Estate. Declaring that it is intended to demonstrate that the practice of field sports can be reconciled with the NTS' statutory obligation to promote public access;
- (iii) The NTS shall ensure that there is a presumption in favour of the natural regeneration of the native Caledonian pine forest through the effective management of the number of deer. Notwithstanding the foregoing, it is understood that in certain circumstances, for example where no suitable native seed source exists, some initial planting and fencing may be required but such planting shall not be carried out in areas where the quality of heather moorland would be adversely affected;
- (iv) That part of the Estate lying to the south and west of the River Dee and comprising heather moorland shall be sensitively managed to promote its proper conservation in terms of grouse habitat, nature conservation and landscape;
- (v) The NTS shall not permit the development of facilities which would compromise the wild land quality of the Estate. The principle of "the long walk in" shall be maintained at all times and the hills shall not be made easier or safer to climb. Notwithstanding the foregoing in the short to medium term at least, access by the NTS' vehicles may be exercised to carry out effective conservation, deer management and field sports activities. Otherwise the NTS shall make continuous and constant efforts to dissuade, and where possible to prohibit, the use of mechanical or wheeled vehicles and all mechanical recreational activities beyond the immediate environs of the mansion house

known as Mar Lodge. The Trust shall promote implementation of best practice of the SOAC;

- (vi) The NTS will favour the continuing use of existing buildings for their original purpose. Notwithstanding the foregoing the NTS may carry out some development of Mar Lodge including a viable visitor facility but such development shall not compromise the principal aim so far as affecting areas beyond the immediate environs of the mansion house known as Mar Lodge;
- (vii) The NTS will share with the public an appreciation of the issues involved in managing the Estate as a wild land area, through appropriate interpretation and education;
- (viii) The NTS will manage the Estate recognising that it forms part of the wider Cairngorms area.

In a declaration to the Easter Charitable Trust (ECT), the NTS agreed to follow a set of principles in its management of Mar Lodge Estate. These principles were accepted by the NTS Council and became known as the Mar Lodge Estate Management Principles. Council noted that they would not be legally binding but would, in effect, be the donor's wishes, without which the ECT's funding would not have been forthcoming. They are, therefore, regarded as the equivalent of a statement of wishes of a donor of a property to the NTS and there is a moral obligation on the NTS to follow them.

In April 2005, the NTS and the trustees of the ECT agreed how the NTS would interpret and implement Principle (v) above in the light of the Scottish Outdoor Access Code (SOAC). It is therefore the intention of the NTS to encourage all visitors seeking responsible access to have the experience of walking in some of the remotest wild land of the Cairngorm mountains where impact of people and their activity remains minimal. The NTS will continue, therefore, to encourage all its users of the estate to respect its guidance on the use of paths and tracks as laid out in current and future signage and leaflets. In addition in accordance with its wild land policy the NTS will promote at every reasonable opportunity their commitment to the policy of "the long walk in" (from beyond the immediate environs of Mar Lodge) within the spirit of the SOAC, explaining to visitors why they should choose to support that policy.

As a national conservation body the NTS will also continue to use its influence to promote the protection of wild land quality as part of the SOAC. Notwithstanding the above, the NTS acknowledges and will comply with the rights conferred by the Land Reform Act (2003), particularly the access rights relating to the broad range of recreational purposes that may be enjoyed on the Estate.

In 2006, the NTS and the Trustees of the ECT agreed to amend the MLE Management Principles to reflect legislative changes and these management principles are now known as the Mar Lodge Estate Management Principles 2006, above.

Supplementary to the above Principles, in managing the estate, NTS will act in accordance with the terms and conditions set out in the Management Agreement between the NTS and SNH, registered and recorded on 31 July 1995.